

LEVERAGING INFORMAL FOOD BUSINESSES TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY FOOD ENVIRONMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA: A PROTOCOL

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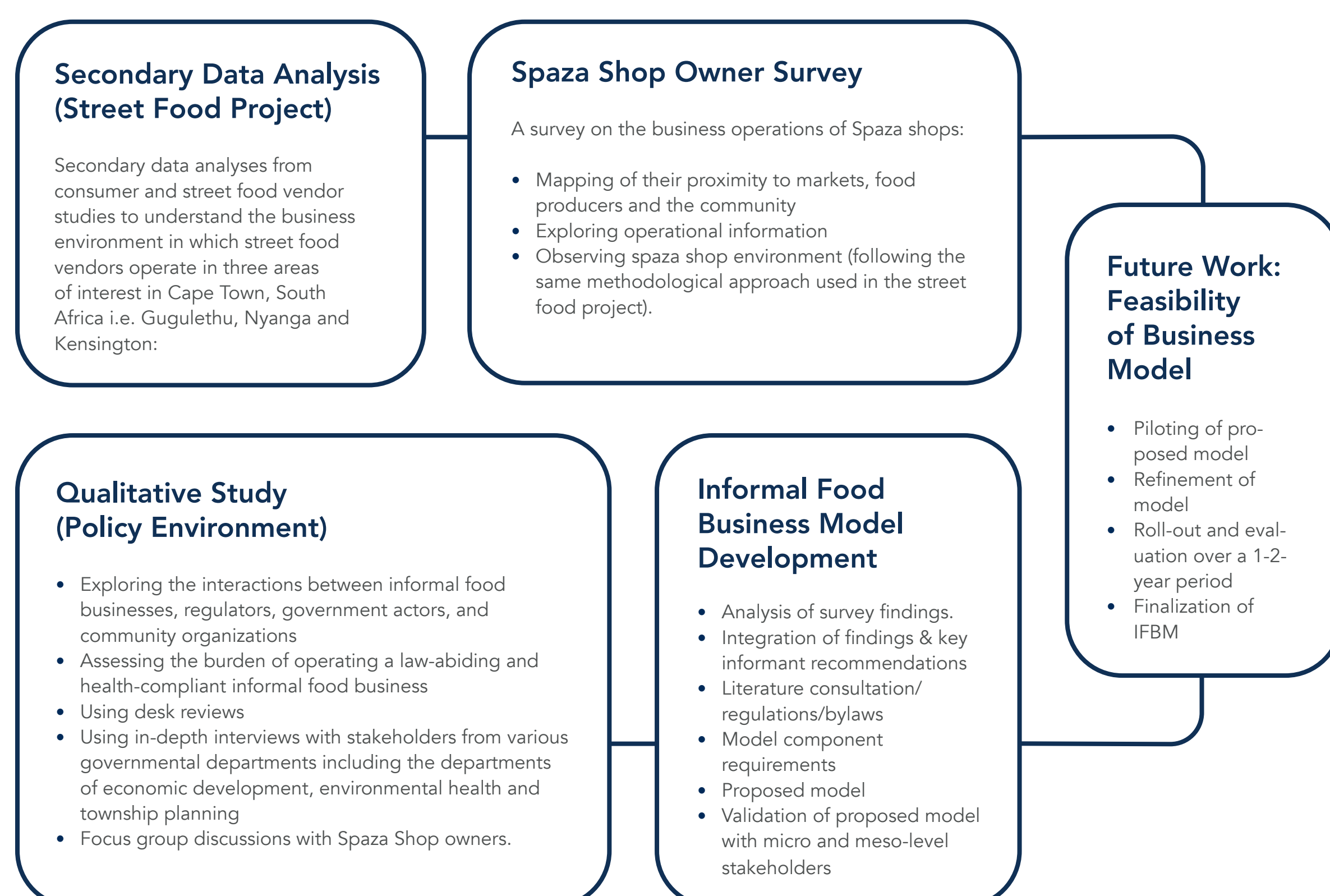
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Background

Diet-related disease risk is associated with foods preferred and consumed based on an individual's choice, which is influenced by their environmental, and socio-economic factors. Access to healthy food is influenced by the community and the consumer nutrition environment. Regarding the first, many people in South Africa rely on informal food outlets, particularly street food vendors and Spaza shops, for food purchases. Street foods are ready-to-eat foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors and hawkers in streets and similar places. Spaza Shops "are informal convenience community shop[s] in South Africa, usually run from home", which sell a limited variety of groceries and are generally not registered. The aim of this study is to update, expand and adapt an existing Informal Food Business Model to accommodate Spaza Shops.



Methods

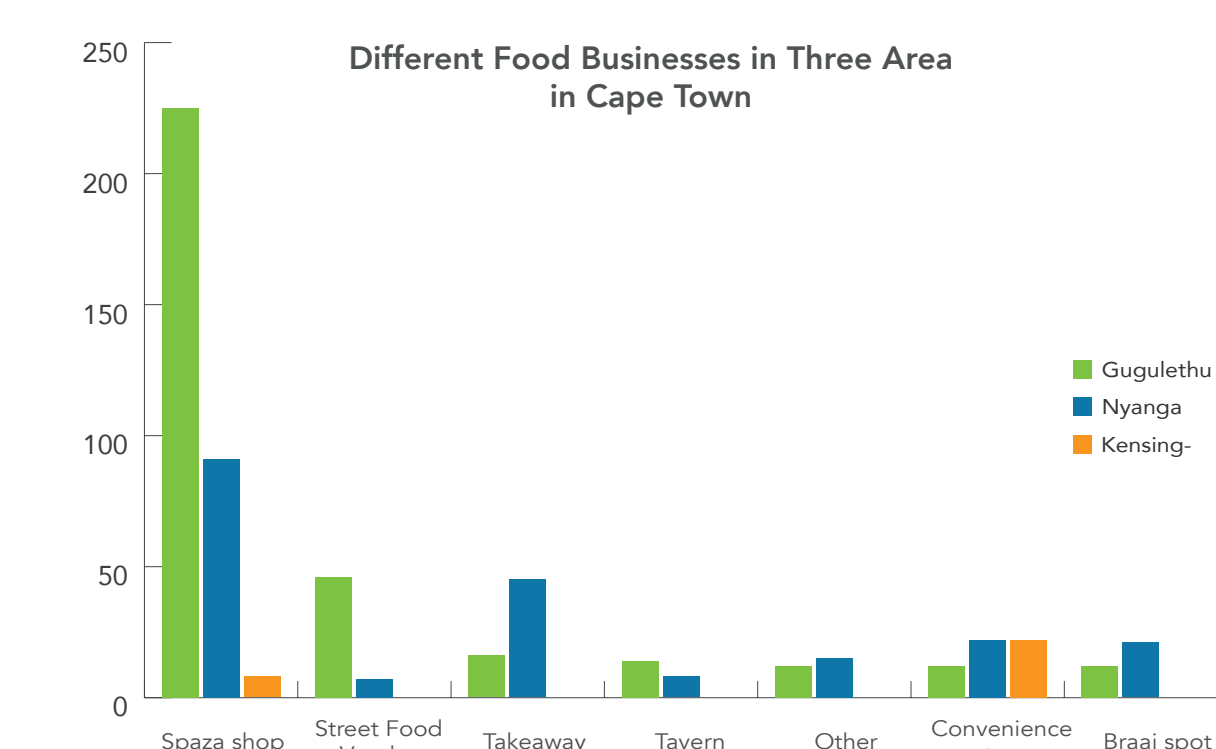
An evidence-based approach, using mixed methods, will be used to develop this model, consisting of four phases:

1. Secondary data analyses from consumer and street food vendor studies to understand the business environment in which street food vendors operate.
2. A spaza shop owner survey to conduct a survey on business operation of the spaza/ community shops and map their proximity to the markets, food producers and community.
3. A qualitative study on the interactions between informal food businesses, regulators, government actors, and community organizations, and assessment of the burden of operating a law-abiding and health-compliant informal food business, using desk reviews, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with Spaza Shop owners.
4. Development of an Informal Business Model for street food vendors and Spaza Shops based on the findings from this research and validation of the Informal Business Model.

Community Food Environment

Table 1. Food businesses in three townships in Cape Town

Food Businesses	Gugulethu	Nyanga	Kensington	Total
Spaza shop	225	91	8	324
Street Food Vendor	46	7	1	54
Takeaway	16	45		61
Tavern	14	8		22
Other (Fruit and Veg, etc.)	12	15		27
Convenience store	12	22	22	56
Braai spot (Barbeque)	12	21		33
Total	337	209	31	577



Pre-liminary Results (Phase 2) - Mapping

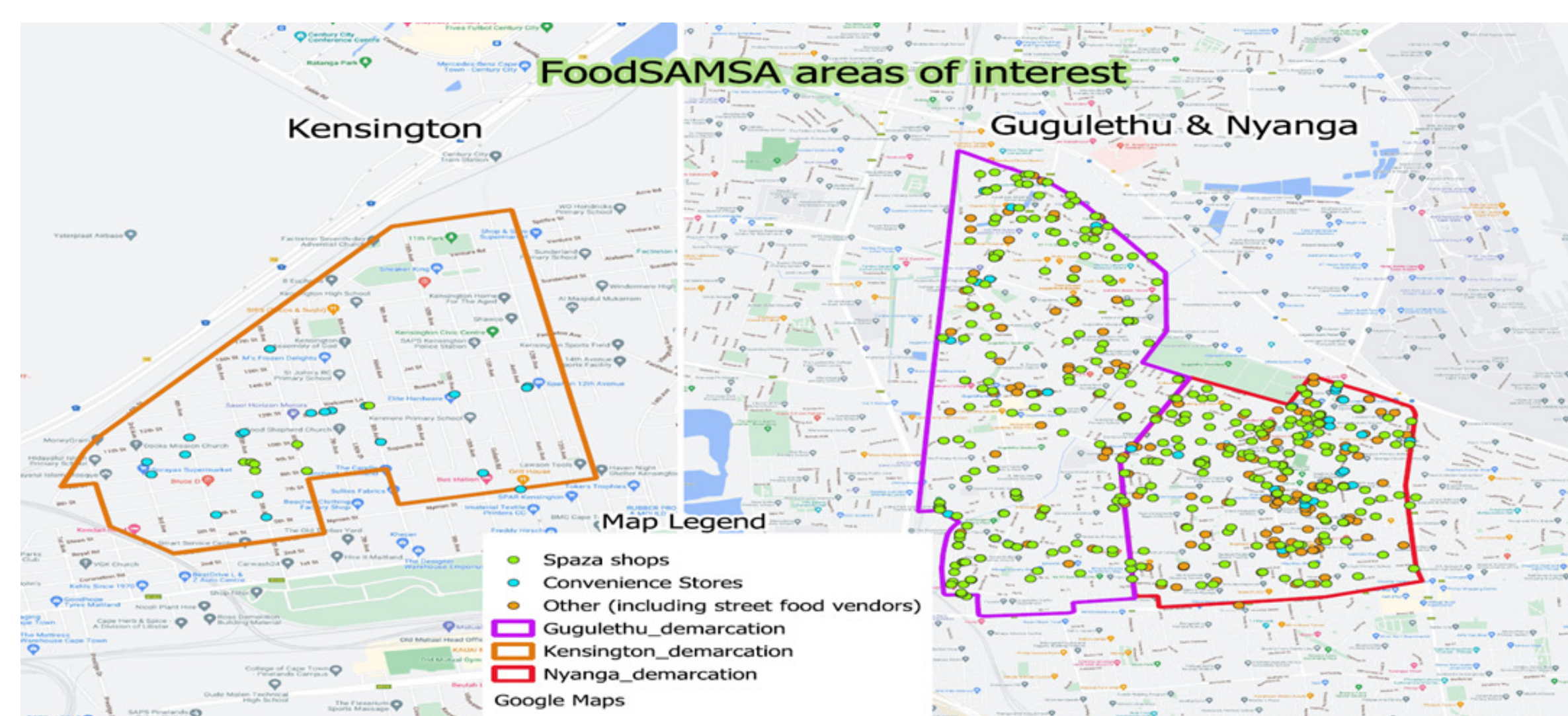
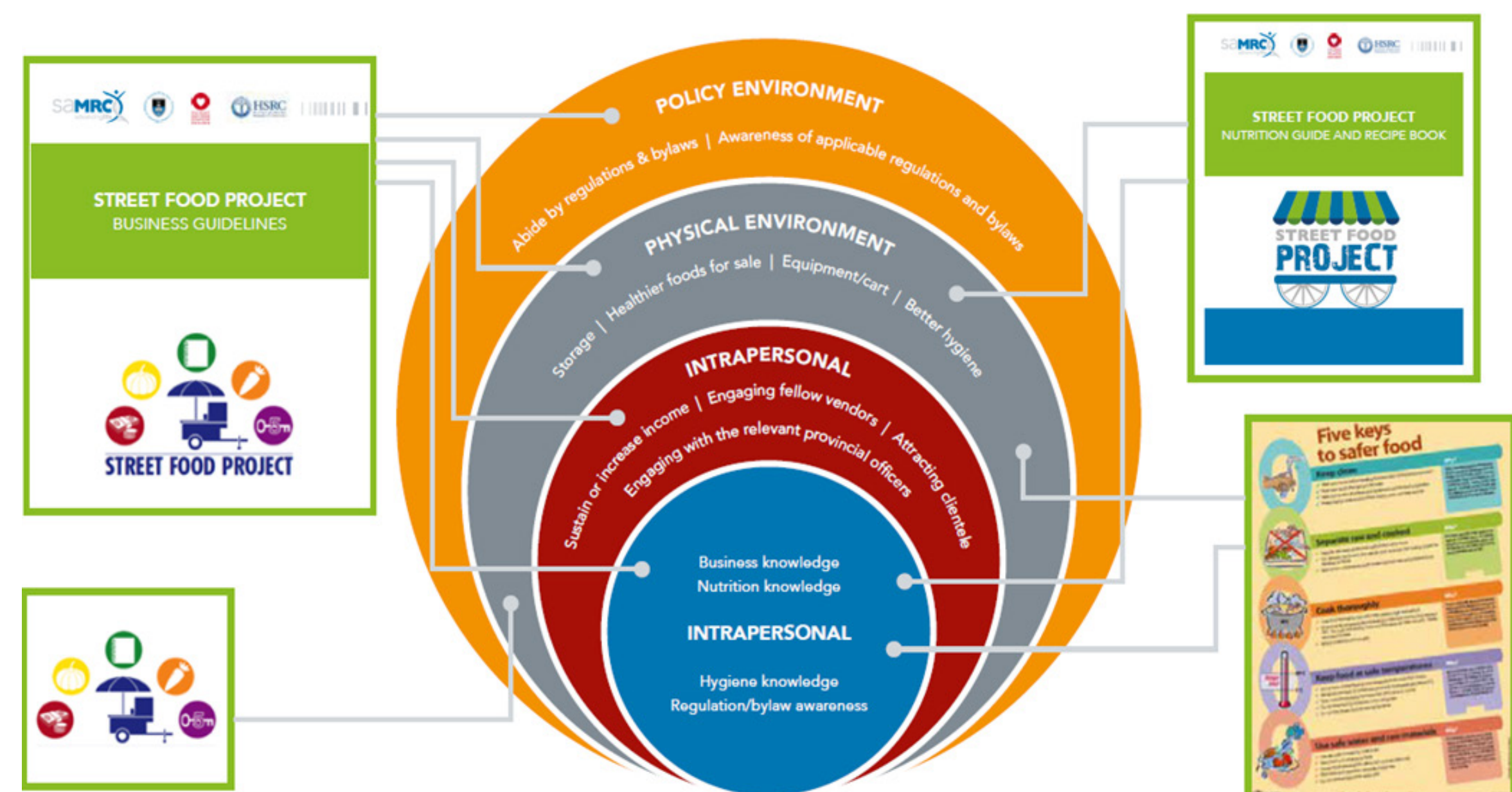


Fig.1. Geospatial mapping of coordinates collected with Redcap instrument using QGIS software.



Conclusion

This study will result in a new Informal Food Business Model that will empower informal food business owners, such as Street Food Vendors and Spaza Shop owners to run a financially sustainable, health compliant business that supports healthier food choices among consumers.